

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, CZ
SUBJECT: MFA HOSTS HOLIDAY PARTY FOR CULTURAL COUNSELORS,
OFFICIAL GOC CULTURAL COMMUNITY

USIA FOR IEU

1. MORE THAN 100 PERSONS, REPRESENTING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE
OFFICIAL GOC CULTURAL COMMUNITY, AND EMBASSY CULTURAL COUNSELORS,
WERE INVITED TO THE MFA DECEMBER 22 FOR WHAT WAS ANNOUNCED
AS "FRIENDLY CONVERSATIONS" WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER
VLADIMIR BERGER, WHO HANDLES CULTURAL AFFAIRS FOR THE MFA.
BERGER, UNFORTUNATELY, WAS IN THE HOSPITAL WITH A SERIOUS
ILLNESS BUT HIS DEPUTY, JUDA, HOSTED THE GATHERING IN HIS
ABSENCE.

2. AMB. JOSEF ZABOKRTSKY, DEPUTY HEAD OF THE CULTURAL DIVISION
OF THE MINISTRY, SAID THAT, ONCE THE US-GOC EXCHANGES AGREEMENT
IS COMPLETED, MOST RESPONSIBILITY FOR P AND C CONTACTS
AT THE MINISTRY WILL PASS FROM THE 6TH DEPARTMENT TO THE CULTURAL
DEPARTMENT, HOWEVER, "WE ARE STILL NOT SURE IF MINISTER SPACIL
OR MINISTER BERGER WILL BE IN CHARGE OF US CULTURAL ACTIVITIES."

3. ZABOKRTSKY SAID MARCH WOULD BE AN IDEAL TIME TO BEGIN
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TALKS ABOUT IMPLEMENTING THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT. HE SAID THE GOC
HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHO WILL LEAD ITS DELEGATION TO DISCUSS
PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION, AND DID WE KNOW WHO WOULD HEAD US DELEGATION,
WOULD THE TALKS BE HELD IN PRAGUE OR WASHINGTON, AND WHO WOULD
SIGN FOR THE US? WE REPLIED THE TALKS WOULD BE HELD IN PRAGUE,
WE WERE NOT SURE YET WHO WOULD SIGN THE FINAL DOCUMENT, BUT MOST

OF THE SPECIFIC PROGRAM TALKS WOULD PROBABLY BE CONDUCTED BY EMBASSY OFFICERS WITH PARTICIPATION BY STATE'S CU/EE AND USIA'S IEU.

4. TUGAN VESELEY, DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR CZECHOSLOVAK FILM OFFICE, IMPLIED HE HAD WRITTEN THE "TV AND FILMS" SECTION OF THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT, SAID THAT HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE US HAD BEEN MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL, ANDDD THAT THE CZECH FILM "A HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY," BY THE RECENTLY REINSTATED DIRECTOR JIRI MENZEL WAS AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS AT THE SAN FRANCISCO FILM FESTIVAL. THE PAO SAID THE MAIN BARRIER TO MORE CZECHOSLOVAK FILMS BEING SHOWN IN THE US WAS NOT POLITICAL, BUT HAD TO DO WITH THE QUALITY OF THE CZECH FILMS AND THE MARKET. ADDED THAT, AT REQUEST OF CZECHOSLOVAK TV, EMBASSY HAS PREPARED LIST OF MAJOR AMERICAN TV FILM BUYERS, BUT WHEN CZECHOSLOVAK TV RECENTLY RETURNED COPIES OF SCIENCE REPORT AND VISION, TWO HIGH-QUALITY NON-POLITICAL USIA PRODUCTS, WITHOUT COMMENT, AFTER HAVING AGREED TO SCREEN THEM AND DISCUSS THEIR REACTION WITH PAO, LATTER SAW NO USEFUL PURPOSE IN TAKING INITIATIVE TO AID CZECHOSLOVAK TV WITH ITS MARKETING PROBLEM. VESELEY SAID THERE MUST BE A MISUNDERSTANDING, CALLED DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS FOR CZECHOSLOVAK TV OVER TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION. LATTER HEARD THE PROBLEM OUT, AND ANNOUNCED HE WAS LATE FOR A SCREENING OF WHAT PROGRAMS WOULD BE SHOWN THIS NEW YEAR'S ON PRAGUE TV, AND HEARTILY WISHED US ALL HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

5. DIRECTOR OF FOREIGN RELATIONS FOR CZECHOSLOVAK RADIO SAID HE WAS PLANNING TO ACCOMPANY BRNO RADIO FOLKLORE TROUPE ON SIX-WEEK TOUR OF US BEGINNING IN JANUARY AND THAT "IT HAS BEEN MY DREAM FOR MANY YEARS TO SEE THE STATES."

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6. THE EVENING BEGAN WITH THE SHOWING OF AN OUTSTANDING COLOR DOCUMENTARY ON ARTS NOUVEAUX ARCHITECTURE IN PRAGUE, DONE BY THE WELL-KNOWN CZECH DIRECTOR, FRANTISEK VLACHIL. SKILLFULLY SHOT AND MOUNTED, AND VOID OF ANY POLITICAL MESSAGE, IT WOULD BE A CONTENDER FOR HONORS IN ANY FILM FESTIVAL. UNFORTUNATELY, THE GENERAL POWER FAILURE DECENDED ON THE HRADCANY REGION JUST BEFORE THE FILM'S ENDING, AND LIVERIED FOOTMEN BEARING CANDELABRA, AS IN THE TYL THEATER'S PRODUCTION OF DON GIOVANNI, APPEARED, AND LED THE GROUP DOWN THE CZERNINSKY PALACE'S BAROQUE HALLS TO A BARONIAL SPREAD OF PRAGUE HAM, ROAST BEEF, AND A SELECTION OF THE BEST CZECH WINES. IN THE GLOOM THE SOVIET AND AMERICAN CULTURAL COUNSELORS ENDED UP TOGETHER, EXTENDING HOLIDAY GREETINGS TO FAMILIES, ETC.

7. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN RECENT YEARS THE GOC HAS UNDERTAKEN SUCH AN INITIATIVE FOR THE OFFICIAL CULTURAL COMMUNITY. THE MOOD WAS CORDIAL, THE ATMOSPHERE

CONVIVIAL, AND THE SLAVIC HOSPITALITY GENEROUS. IT ALSO PROVIDED
AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET MOST OF THE MAJOR FIGURES IN THE MFA'S
CULTURAL DEPARTMENT, WITH WHOM WE WILL PROBABLY BE DEALING
IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.
BYRNE

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